



Mozambique: Government Plans to Renegotiate Fishing Agreement

29 NOVEMBER 2013

Maputo — The Mozambican government intends to renegotiate its fishing agreement with the European Union, particularly with regard to tuna fishing, according to a report in Friday's issue of the independent newsheet "Mediafax".

Fisheries Minister Vitor Borges told reporters on Thursday that a team of Mozambican officials has gone to Brussels to tell the EU fisheries authorities of the Mozambican government's plans to ensure that tuna fishing in Mozambique's Exclusive Economic Zone should be undertaken mostly by Mozambican vessels.

"The Strategic Plan for the Development of the Tuna Fishery (PEDPA) banks on the development of a national fleet so that, in the next 15 years, this activity comes to be dominated by Mozambicans", said Borges.

The current agreement with the EU expires in 2014, and the government intends to renegotiate it, in order to protect the entry into the business of the Mozambican Tuna Company (EMATUM) and guarantee its sustainability.

Borges was speaking after a debate in parliament, arising from requests by the two opposition parties, Renamo and the Mozambique Democratic Movement (MDM), for information on the deal whereby EMATUM is purchasing 24 fishing vessels and six patrol boats from a shipyard in the French port of Cherbourg.

Justifying the purchase, Borges and Prime Minister Alberto Vaquina told parliament that currently, of the 130 vessels licensed to fish for tuna in Mozambican waters, only one flies the Mozambican flag.

The only benefit Mozambique derives from this arrangement is the million dollars a year which these vessels pay in licence fees.

But the government expects EMATUM to bring in 90 million dollars a year, rising to 200 million dollars when the fleet is fully operational.

"The creation of EMATUM is intended to start the emancipation of Mozambique in the tuna business, so that Mozambicans can have their own national capacity to exploit a resource that is rightfully theirs", declared Vaquina.

EMATUM will not have exclusive rights over the tuna stocks.

Borges said that there are tuna fishing proposals from a further five Mozambican companies currently being analysed by his Ministry.

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